

Release Book

THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
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The work of a great American artist, Lyonel Feininger, comes to The Cleveland Museum of Art February 17. This Memorial Exhibition brings to full account the great artistic achievements of Feininger - a key figure in art during the first half of the twentieth century. 72 oil paintings, 53 water colors and 12 drawings comprise the exhibition organized by Mrs. Lyonel Feininger, widow of the painter; Marian Willard, Willard Gallery, New York and Henry Francis, Curator of Paintings, The Cleveland Museum of Art. After being exhibited in five museums of the United States the show will go to England and Germany.

Lyonel Feininger was born in New York in 1871. The son of musicians, he began to study violin at the age of nine and in 1887 went to Germany to continue his music. Instead he studied art in Berlin and Paris. He became one of Germany's leading caricaturists. He created 'The Kin-der Kids' and 'Wee Willie Winkie's World' for the Chicago SUNDAY TRIBUNE. At thirty-five he gave up caricature and turned seriously to painting. Feininger exhibited at the SALON DES INDEPENDANTS where the first showing of the cubists took place. Having himself anticipated cubist and futurist conceptions of space and speed Feininger now had the impetus to develop his mature style. He became the first of the Bauhaus masters in 1919 with Klee, Kandinsky, Moholy Nagy and others, together they created a spiritual force in the art of the twentieth century. By 1924 Feininger had exhibited in Europe, the United States and Mexico. In 1936 he settled in New York bringing to life in 1939 SCENES OF MANHATTAN his first American paintings. In 1944 The Metropolitan Museum of Art held a Feininger retrospective show and in 1951 The Cleveland Museum of Art exhibited his work. He died in New York in 1956 - a master of modern art.

Feininger's work, like Cezanne's, shows that he began with the natural event. In his work he transposed nature into the sphere of thought and found new forms for its spirit. Abstraction in the sense of 'non-objective' was not his aim but abstraction in the sense of distilling the essence and inner truth of events was his goal. His color is rich and varied, full of mysterious beauty and luminosity.

Vertical and horizontal planes fused with light and color are part of Feininger's style. There is something miraculous in his paintings - a mystery - different from that of any artist of his generation.

Notable in this collection are Feininger's paintings of the sea, clouds, sunsets, scenes at dusk, churches, towers and town gates. LUNAR WEB is one of the glorious paintings in the present show. It is a summary of the art and vision of one of the founders of the art of our time.

The exhibition hangs in the Special Exhibition Gallery. Over one hundred Feininger prints and water color drawings are shown as a supplementary exhibition in Gallery E. Featured in the Educational Corridor of the Museum is a display entitled THE RELIEF PRINT with specific reference to the work of Feininger.

The show continues through March 20 and is open free to the public.

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